

Why the MoMoWo project?

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MoMoWo 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE-WORKSHOP

Women Designers, Architects and Engineers
between 1946 and 1968

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

Research Centre of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts
// Slovenia
France Stele Institute of Art History

Ljubljana, 3-4-5-October 2016

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WOMEN'S CREATIVITY SINCE
THE MODERN MOVEMENT

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Women Designers, Architects and Engineers between 1946 and 1968
MoMoWo 2nd International Conference-Workshop

Programme and Abstracts

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INTRODUCTION

● About MoMoWo Women's Creativity since the Modern Movement (1918-2018)

Caterina Franchini and Emilia Garda

Women's creativity since the Modern Movement - MoMoWo is a large-scale cooperation cultural project co-financed by the European Union's Creative Culture Programme under the Culture Sub-Programme (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency - EACEA). It is a four-year non-profit project that began on 20th October 2014.

The project considers an issue of contemporary cultural, social and economic importance from a European and interdisciplinary perspective namely women's achievements in the design professions. These achievements are in fields including architecture, civil engineering, urban planning, landscape design, interior design, furniture and furnishing design some of which are still perceived as traditionally male professions.

The project works towards the harmonious development of European society by removing disparities and increasing gender equality both in the workplace and beyond. MoMoWo aims to reveal and promote the contribution of women design professionals to European cultural heritage which, until now, has been significantly 'hidden from history'. At the same time - considering History as a 'living matter' - it aims to promote and increase the value of the works and achievements of past and present generations of women professionals to give strength to future generations of creative women.

This project, organised for the first time on a European scale, was conceived to be interdisciplinary and is intended to give a new impetus to broaden studies in Europe and beyond. Besides the Project Leader, Politecnico di Torino - POLITO, MoMoWo has six co-organisers from universities and research centres in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. The co-organisers' fields of interest are complementary to each other.

The research teams are made up of architects, civil engineers, designers, art historians, historians of architecture, design historians, technologists, political scientists and economists from six different countries. They are specialised in: gender studies, Modern Movement history and technology, cultural heritage, cultural tourism and marketing. This mix of knowledge and skills is essential in order to consider MoMoWo as a multidisciplinary project, thus providing European added value and fostering the protection and promotion of European cultural diversity. All project activities have been planned to bring together the know-how and skills of each co-organiser.

The project has been conceived in a dynamic perspective. It has been planned that the activities could continue even over the European financing deadline.

Emilia Garda

● Why the MoMoWo project?

The project originated from a number of under reported issues. The contemporary history of women's creativity and the tangible cultural heritage produced by women's works is still mostly unknown today, not only by the general public, but also by students, scholars and professionals.

Through experience gained during research and teaching it has been noticed that, except for a few monographs or female gender anthologies, women's works are not highlighted in text books on the History of Architecture, History of Building Technologies and Engineering, Urban History and Design History. Furthermore, buildings designed by women are rarely included in tourist or architectural guidebooks of major European cities. Only a few 'archistar'© women are represented by the History of Contemporary Architecture, although a considerable number of women architects appears in prestigious specialised magazines. Conversely, in twentieth century history many women designers in the textiles, fashion, jewellery and ceramics fields have made a name for themselves and their talent has been fully recognised.

Through the project we would like to answer questions that have been raised in Europe since the 1920s and that are still of great relevance today. Is there a professional space for European women in traditionally male professions? What can be learned from European women pioneers so as to improve women's current professional achievements in architecture, civil engineering and design?

The project intends to bridge the gap between past and future generations in order to increase the awareness of capabilities of the female gender and contribute to women's liberation from professional prejudices and clichés. This is why from the outset of the project proposal, engaging a broader public with works created by women has been a priority in order to engender new perceptions of professions and new narratives in the fields of architecture, civil engineering and design.

The ambition of this cultural project goes beyond the mere cliché that women architects, civil engineers and designers should be entrusted with tasks specifically related to women in order to make certain built spaces or products even more successful, on the grounds that women have 'a different view of things'. Consequently, through its activities MoMoWo tackles a real equal opportunities theme, in both the past and present.

The project's major research activity consists of a database of women architects, civil engineers and designers active in their profession in Europe, from 1918. It has been created to support MoMoWo cultural activities and its products, such as the guidebook of architectural and design itineraries, the international travelling exhibition and its catalogue, and the final symposium and its books. Three historical conference-workshops (1st Leiden 2015, 2nd Ljubljana 2016, and 3rd Oviedo 2017) and their open-access pub-

lications aim to collect materials to enrich the database and to share and debate the design experiences of European women.

Two international competitions, the first for the design of MoMoWo visual identity and the second, for a photography reportage on women architects' own homes were conceived to transform audiences from passive receivers into creators and active users of cultural contents.

Annual open days held in professional women's studios celebrate International Women's Day every 8th March in partners' countries. They are intended to provide the opportunity to make new contacts by visiting women architects, civil engineers and designers' studios, thus transferring know-how between different generations, networking with professionals and creating a sense of community.

Last, but not least, the MoMoWo website is both a repository of research products and experiences and their dissemination tools. Therefore, to find out more about the project and its activities visit: www.momowo.eu

Caterina Franchini

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● MoMoWo Historical Conference-Workshops with Public Interviews to Women Professionals

Caterina Franchini

The MoMoWo Historical Conference-Workshops provide the opportunity to share and debate the design experiences of European women; they are finalised to collect materials for the Database implementation going beyond national partners interests.

The three workshops reflect the three sections of the database. The first period (1918-1945) corresponding to the official entry of women into the construction world, when women's presence was sporadic and confined to the innovative drive of the avant-garde. The second period (1946-1968) represents a time of expanding opportunities for female design professionals. The third period (1969-1989) shows the significant production both qualitatively and quantitatively of women's works reflecting the contribution of feminist movements.

The workshops are addressed to scholars and students and are opened to local audience. The content of the Workshop will be published in open-access e-books and videos with interviews of women professionals and it will be downloadable from the MoMoWo official website.

● Women Designers, Architects and Engineers between 1946 and 1968

Helena Seražin

In most European countries the period between 1946 and 1968 was marked by intensive rebuilding of the post-war society and its urban spaces. Second historical conference-workshop is addressing themes and subjects regarding political and societal shifts of the period and how did they affected women active in creative professions. The following topics as a starting point for future research were explored:

I EDUCATION AND PUBLISHING

What access did female students have to schools of architecture, design and building engineering? Did they experience any obstacles? How were women professionals included in the education process and how were they represented in the academia? What are the characteristics of their affiliation with professional architectural publications (journals, magazines) either as contributors or members of editorial boards?

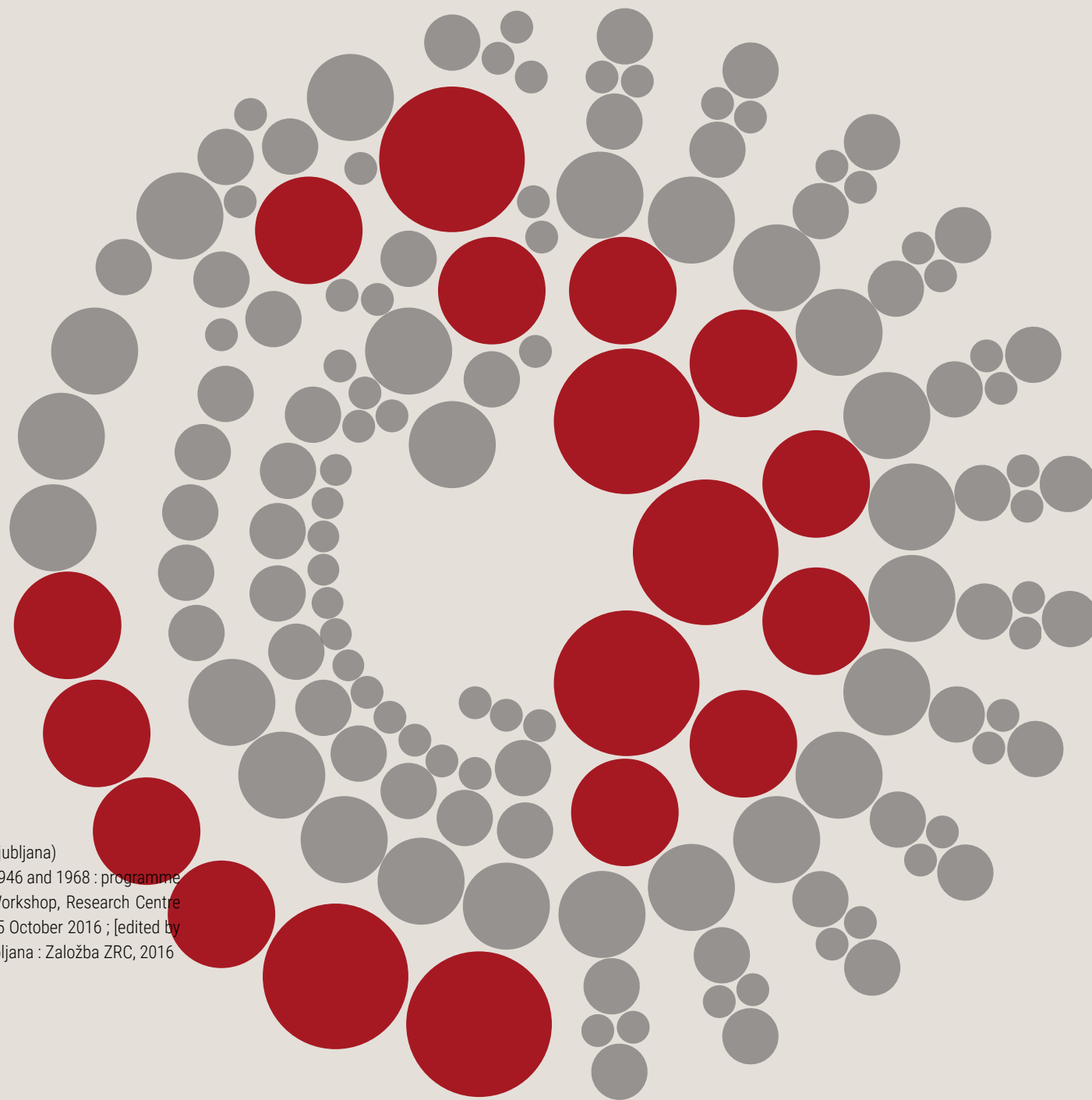
II POLITICS, POLICIES AND POLITICAL REGIMES

What was the position of women architects and designers in different political regimes and how did it compare? (How) was it incorporated into state policies? Did any particular "female specialisations" within the fields of architecture, design, urban planning, civil engineering etc. emerge in this period? If so, what were their characteristics and how were they encouraged? How were women represented in architectural exhibitions and competitions? What role did they play in conservation and restoration of architectural heritage? (How) did they negotiate with the gender bias in their profession?

III RESEARCH AND INDUSTRIES

What was the role of women in developing social housing projects, how were they involved in research and studies of interior design according to human scale? What position did they take in the developing field of industrial design? Did the extent of their participation in building construction change in comparison with the pre-war pioneers, and if so – in what ways? In the field of civil engineering what was women's involvement in creation of new construction techniques and development of materials?

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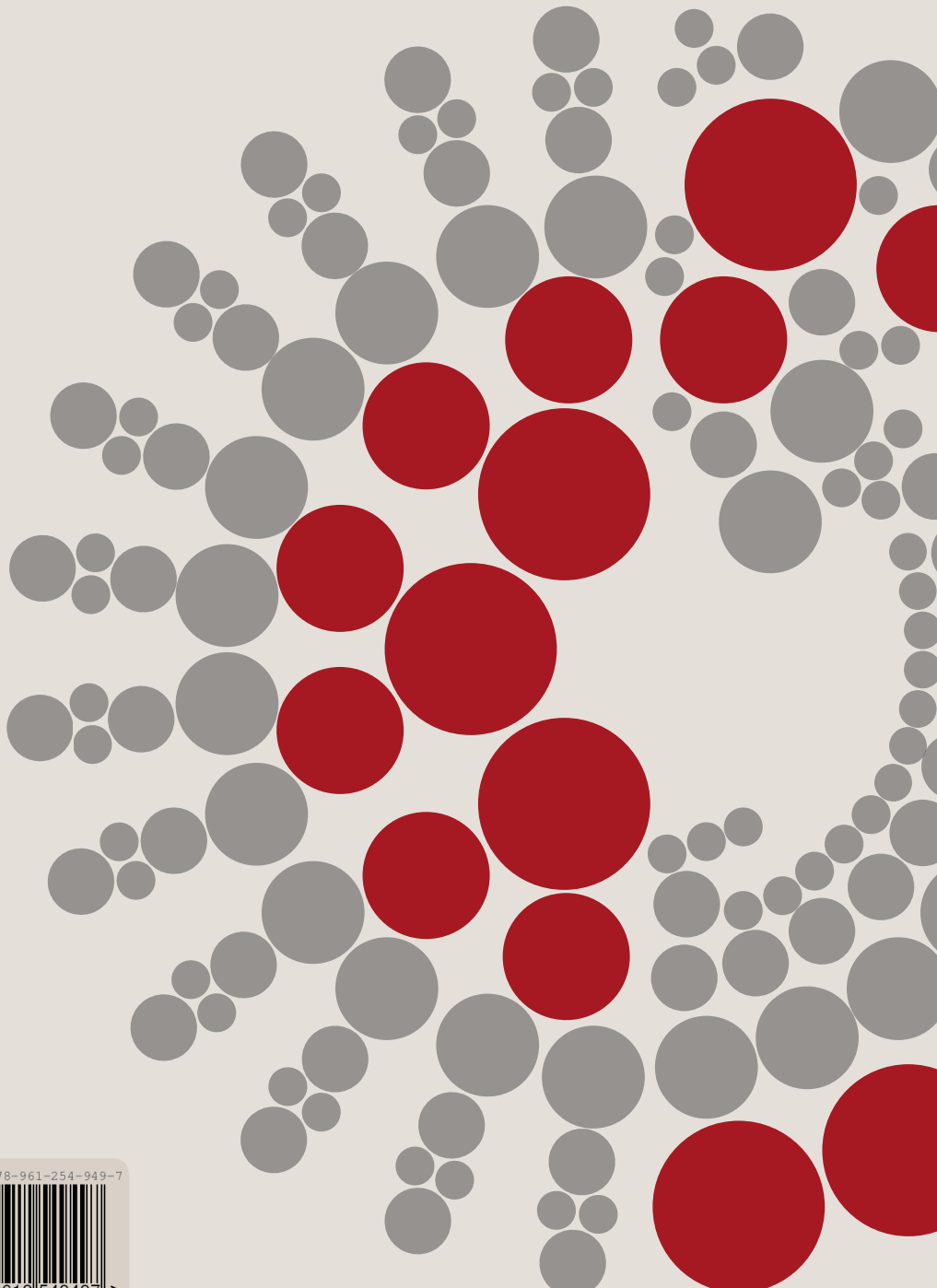
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